

STATEMENT OF MR. LEON L. WHEELLESS, STAFF DIRECTOR, CIVILIAN PERSONNEL
POLICY, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (MANPOWER,
PERSONNEL AND RESERVE), BEFORE A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
SENATE POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE,
THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 1960, 2:00 P.M.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

I am Leon L. Wheelless, Staff Director for Civilian Personnel Policy in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Manpower, Personnel and Reserve. With me is Mr. John A. Watts, Director of Civilian Personnel of the Department of the Air Force.

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the provisions of H. R. 7758 and H. R. 10695, both of which are of considerable interest to the Department of Defense.

After World War II it became necessary for the first time for the Department of Defense and many other Federal agencies to employ U. S. citizens in foreign areas in rather large numbers. While the numbers of such personnel have declined over the years, there still remain some 20,000 U. S. citizens employed by this Department in foreign countries. As long as the maintenance of sizeable military forces overseas is required in the interest of national defense, it will continue to be necessary to support these forces with U. S. citizen civilian personnel.

Considerable progress has been made in resolving many of the problems first experienced in utilizing U. S. citizen employees in foreign countries and in improving the personnel programs applicable to overseas areas. H. R. 7758 and H. R. 10695 will enable further improvements which are highly desirable.

Mr. Hull of the State Department has explained to you in detail the provisions of H. R. 7758. Many of these provisions are available to the Department of Defense under current laws, but there are some authorities which would be new. These would include:

1. Authority to pay a temporary lodging allowance to an employee for up to three months after arrival at, and for up to one month before departure from, an overseas post. Such authority is now available only to agencies authorized to use the Foreign Service Act provisions. Temporary lodging allowances are intended to cover an employee's hotel room expenses upon first arrival at a foreign post, while looking for suitable quarters and awaiting arrival of furniture, and to cover similar expenses immediately prior to departure from a foreign post, when the employee has relinquished his lease on permanent quarters.

2. Authority for storage of household goods and personal effects, at Government expense, when the employee is assigned to an overseas post to which he cannot take, or at which he cannot use, such goods and effects. This authority is presently available to agencies under the Foreign Service Act. It would relieve an employee of personal expense for storage when conditions beyond his control would preclude his using his effects at an overseas post of assignment. The same weight limitations applicable to shipment would also apply to storage of household goods and personal effects.

3. Authority for transportation to and from overseas posts of privately-owned motor vehicles of civilian employees, when determined to be in the interest of the Government. There are many overseas posts at which, due to inadequacy of local transportation facilities, availability of his privately-owned motor vehicle is necessary for proper performance of an employee's duties. At present, if he cannot purchase an automobile locally at a satisfactory price, a Defense civilian employee must personally bear the cost of shipping an automobile from the States to his

post of assignment. The authority contained in H. R. 7758 would permit correction of this inequitable situation, when considered to be in the interest of the Department.

4. Authority to provide for "home leave", comparable to that available to agencies operating under the Foreign Service Act. At present Defense employees in overseas areas accrue annual leave on the same basis as State-side employees. Since much of this leave is used locally for personal requirements and vacation purposes, inadequate leave sometimes remains for the periodic vacations in the States which are both necessary and desirable for U. S. citizen employees. The "home leave" provision would permit additional leave for this purpose. The provision is permissive only, and would be used only to the extent determined to be necessary in consideration of conditions of employment in particular overseas areas. Any "home leave" not used by an employee during his period of overseas employment would not be available for lump-sum payment upon separation.

H. R. 7758 would also amend the current authority in the Administrative Expenses Act relating to the shipment of household effects of civilian employees. The current law permits shipment of 7,000 lbs. uncrated, or 8,750 lbs. crated. The uncrated figure of 7,000 lbs is considered adequate. However, the weight of packing and crating for overseas shipments averages about 90 percent of the weight of the household effects, so that for all practical purposes the net weight limit is reduced to slightly over 4,000 lbs. This unrealistic gross limit has resulted in a number of employees having to pay for overweight shipments. H. R. 7758 would eliminate the gross weight limit and establish a net weight limit of 7,000 lbs. This would be consistent with the laws governing the shipment of household effects of military personnel and of Foreign Service personnel.

Page 4

The various provisions of H. R. 7758 would be administered in accordance with regulations to be issued by the President. Within the Department of Defense we would propose to administer the authorities granted by this bill on a strict basis, authorizing only those provisions in each foreign area which are considered necessary to insure fair and equitable treatment for our employees. We consider that enactment of this legislation will greatly improve our civilian personnel program in foreign areas and will provide the much needed consistency with the programs of other agencies. We urge favorable action by this Committee.

H. R. 10695 is legislation which is also of vital importance to the Department of Defense in staffing its positions in foreign areas with competent civilian employees. It will be particularly effective in enabling us to persuade more of our competent employees in the States to accept temporary overseas assignments. Mr. Watts has devoted much time to the development and support of this legislation and I am going to ask him to explain its provisions to you.

* * * * *